

COMIC  
BOOK  
SECTION

PALYACHI, THE KILLER CLOWN

3 COMPLETE  
STORIES

July 28, 1940

# The SPIRIT



by Will  
EISNER

THOUGH BRANDED AN OUTLAW BY THE POLICE, *THE SPIRIT*, IN REALITY DENNY COLT, WHO IS BELIEVED DEAD, FIGHTS CRIME AND CRIMINALS BEYOND THE REACH OF THE LAW.

THE SPIRIT'S REMARKABLE ABILITIES MAKE HIM A RELENTLESS FOE OF THE UNDERWORLD....



LA-DEES AND GENTLEMEN! WE PRESENT PALYACHI, THE KILLER CLOWN!

ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY, WITHIN VIEW OF *THE SPIRIT*'S SECRET HIDEOUT, WILDWOOD CEMETERY, A TRAVELLING CIRCUS PLAYS ITS GAUDY SHOW FOR A FUN-SEEKING AUDIENCE.





THE FIRST ACT IS ON.. THE AUDIENCE IS CONVULSED WITH LAUGHTER.

AMUSED BY A CLOWN KNOWN AS PALLYACHI.



THE ACT OVER. LET US FOLLOW PALLYACHI, AS HE HEADS FOR A DRESSING ROOM MARKED WITH A STAR.



MARKA, DID YOU HEAR THEM?

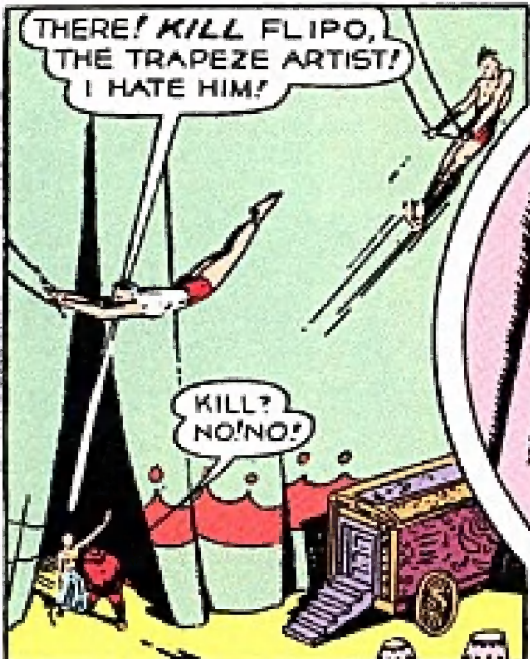
YES... SO WHAT? TO THEM YOU ARE A STUPID LITTLE CLOWN! MAKE SOMETHING OF YOURSELF... YOU WANT TO MARRY ME?? WELL, DO SOMETHING TO PROVE YOUR LOVE!

BUT WHAT?



THERE! KILL FLIPO, THE TRAPEZE ARTIST! I HATE HIM!

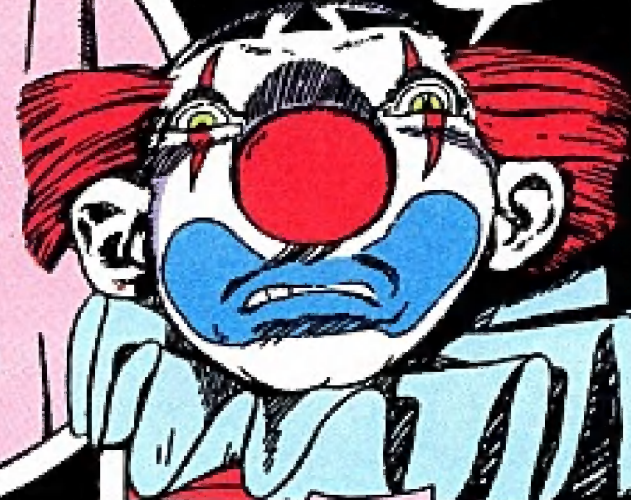
KILL? NO! NO!



AFRAID?? BAH! COWARD! I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN! GO AHEAD! DO IT! REMEMBER, IF YOU LOVE ME...

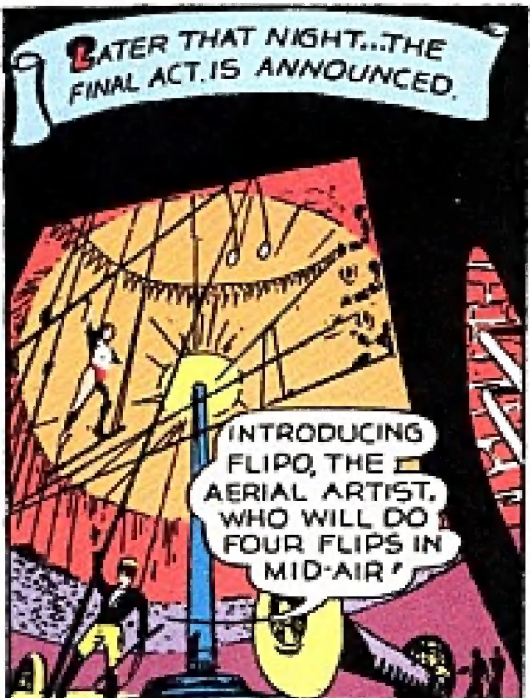


KILL? I CAN'T! I'VE NEVER HARMED A SOUL... (GULP) BUT I MUST! IF I'M TO WIN HER... I-I-I'M MAD ABOUT HER!



LATER THAT NIGHT... THE FINAL ACT IS ANNOUNCED.

INTRODUCING FLIPO, THE AERIAL ARTIST, WHO WILL DO FOUR FLIPS IN MID-AIR!



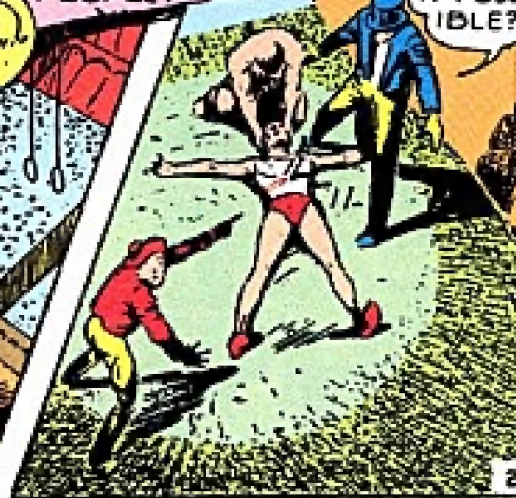
DRUMS ROLL IN ENDLESS THUNDER, AS FLIPO SWINGS FROM ONE SIDE OF THE HUGE TENT TO THE OTHER. AS HE NEARS ONE SIDE, HE SEES PALLYACHI HIDDEN IN THE RAFTERS.



PALLYACHI!! DON'T

UNSEEN, PALLYACHI'S KNIFE FLIES THROUGH THE AIR, AND A MAN IS MURDERED BEFORE THE EYES OF TWO THOUSAND PEOPLE.

DEAD!! A KNIFE IN HIS CHEST! BUT NO ONE WAS NEAR HIM! HOW IS IT POSSIBLE?





THE DESIRE TO KILL IS NOW STRONG WITHIN PALLYACHI THE CLOWN...AND THE NEXT NIGHT A KILLER CLOWN STALKS THE STREETS.



I HAVE BROUGHT YOU ALL I HAVE STOLEN! WILL YOU MARRY ME NOW?



MEANWHILE, NOT FAR AWAY IN THE SPIRIT'S UNDERGROUND HIDEOUT.



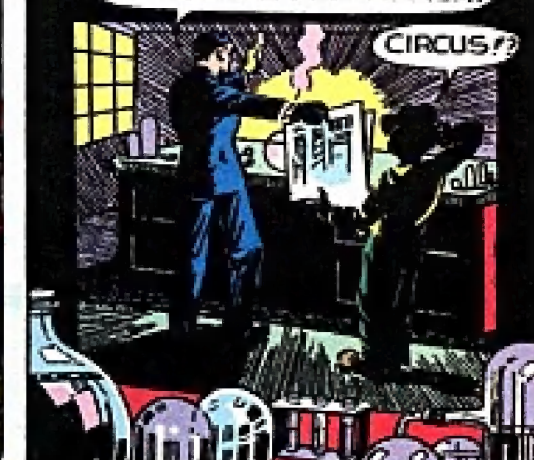
VERY SIMPLE, EBONY.. A MATTER OF THINKING ALONG THE PROPER LINES.



LET ME SEE.. HMM...RESIN.

PEOPLE BAFFLED LATEST IN SERIES OF CLUELESS CRIMES! Bank clerk murdered! No clues, save a bit of powdered resin. Police believe clue to be unimportant.

THAT'S AN EASY ONE. THE RESIN DUST INDICATES SOME SORT OF CIRCUS PERFORMER. IT HELPS THEM GRIP ROPE MORE FIRMLY..THE KILLER IS A CIRCUS PERFORMER!



WHAT? THAT'S A HUNCH! BY JOYE! I THINK I'LL TAKE A LOOK!



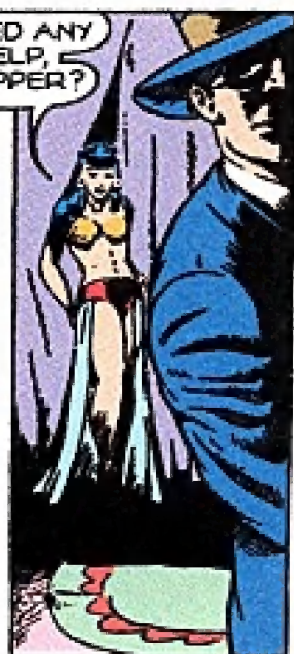
THE CIRCUS IS CLOSED FOR THE NIGHT AS THE SPIRIT HEADS DOWN THE DESERTED MIDWAY.







THIS MUST BE THE STAR'S ROOM... HOLY SMOKE! JEWELRY AND MONEY! ODD FOR A CIRCUS PERFORMER TO BE SO WEALTHY!



NEED ANY HELP, COPPER?



AH CORRECTION, I AM NOT A POLICEMAN... I AM THE SPIRIT!

OH... I'VE HEARD OF YOU!



QUITE AN INTERESTING COLLECTION OF JEWELRY YOU HAVE! I'LL WAGER THEY ALL FIT THE DESCRIPTION OF THOSE STOLEN LAST NIGHT... COME CLEAN!

WELL... YES... THEY ARE! SO WHAT?



I DIDN'T DO IT, BUT I'LL MAKE A DEAL WITH YOU. I'M ANXIOUS TO GET RID OF PALLYACHI ANY-HOW!



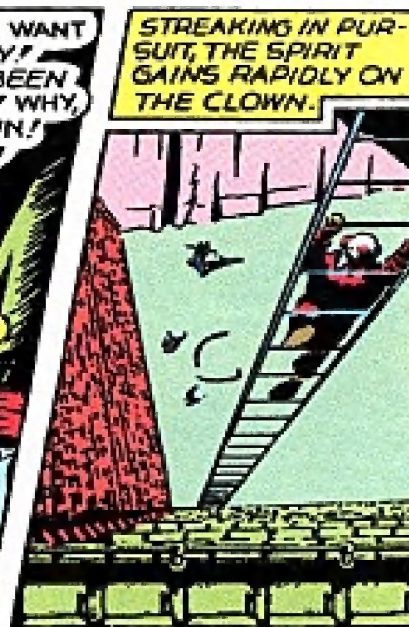
SO I'LL TELL YOU WHO DID IT. TURN HIM OVER TO THE COPS AND THEN YOU AND I CAN GO INTO PARTNERSHIP... YOU'RE PRETTY CLEVER... AND HANDSOME TOO.

WHO?



PALLYACHI, THE CLOWN DID IT!

THAT'S ALL I WANT TO KNOW... HEY! SOMEONE'S BEEN LISTENING IN! WHY, IT'S A CLOWN! ONE SIDE!



STREAKING IN PURSUIT, THE SPIRIT GAINS RAPIDLY ON THE CLOWN.

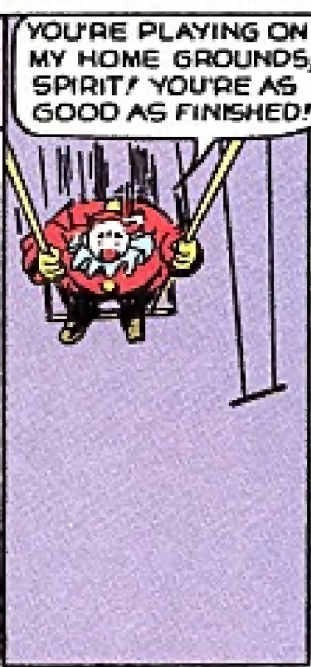


BUT ABOVE

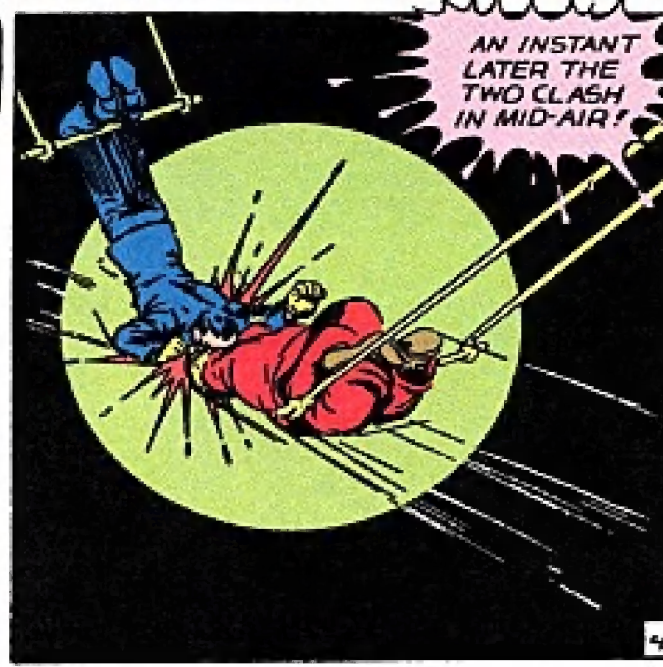
OH! SO THERE YOU ARE! LOST FOR A MOMENT!



LIKE A TRAINED ACROBAT, THE SPIRIT SEIZES A TRAPEZE AND DEFTLY SWINGS IN PURSUIT. . . .



YOU'RE PLAYING ON MY HOME GROUNDS, SPIRIT! YOU'RE AS GOOD AS FINISHED!



AN INSTANT LATER THE TWO CLASH IN MID-AIR!



FOR AN INSTANT THEY GRAPPLE. THEN BOTH LOSE THEIR GRIP ON THE BARS, AND LOCKED IN COMBAT THEY PLUMMET DOWNWARD, LANDING ON A SCAFFOLD...

BUT THE SPIRIT REGAINS HIS FEET INSTANTLY... A DYNAMITE LEFT SENDS THE CLOWN CRASHING INTO THE SUPPORTS... THE BOARDS COLLAPSE ON THE SPIRIT...

THROWING HIM OFF.

AND HE LANDS IN A NET.

HA! HA! NOW I'VE GOT YOU! HA HA HA HA

THE CLOWN STAGGERS TO A CAGE HIGH IN THE RAFTERS.

A SNARLING BEAST EMERGES AND LUNGES.

HA! HA! COME, JOCOPO! I HAVE A JOB FOR YOU... HA HA! THEY PUT YOU UP HERE BECAUSE YOU KILL MEN... WELL NOW I FREE YOU!

THERE HE IS, GET HIM!

BUT THE NET CANNOT HOLD THE WEIGHT OF THE APE IT COLLAPSES

THE SPIRIT NIMBLY CATCHES A TRAPEZE BAR AND WHIRLS

WITH THE TIMING OF A TRIP HAMMER, THE SPIRIT PUMPS BLOW AFTER BLOW INTO THE KILLER CLOWN...

OH OH! THERE'S THE CLOWN TRYING TO ESCAPE!

NOT SO FAST, 'PALY!

FIRST, I'M GOING TO BEAT YOU INTO THE PROPER FRAME OF MIND! THEN I'LL PRESENT YOU TO POLICE COMMISSIONER DOLAN!





SUDDENLY A POWERFUL PAW CLOSES ABOUT THE SPIRIT'S COLLAR IN A VISE-LIKE GRIP...



IT IS THE APE... SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY, PALLYACHI SCAMPERS OFF TO FREEDOM...

IN A FLASH, THE SPIRIT IS OUT OF HIS COAT.



THE APE RAISES HIS ARM AND BRINGS IT DOWN IN A MURDEROUS SWIPE... BY A HAIR'S BREADTH, THE SPIRIT ESCAPES INSTANT DEATH...



THE MONSTER STAGGERS... THE BLOWS OF THE SPIRIT AT LAST TAKE EFFECT. WITH A GROAN THE APE SINKS TO THE SAWDUST...



MEANWHILE, IN HER DRESSING ROOM, MARKA AWAITS THE RETURN OF THE SPIRIT...







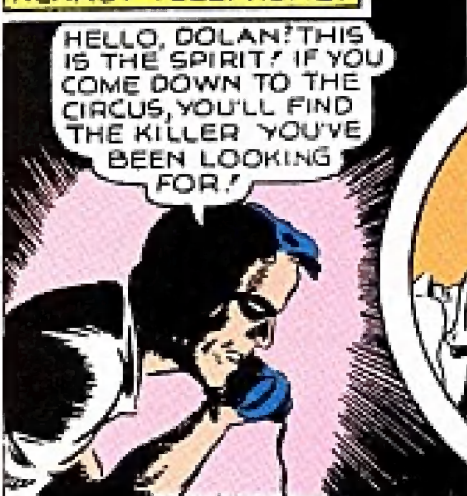
NO NO NO! (GULP)  
LISTEN TO ME... I DIDN'T  
MEAN TO SQUEAL ON  
YOU... I LOVE YOU!  
HEH HEH... I'LL  
**MARRY YOU!**  
**DO YOU**  
**HEAR?**

SUDDENLY THE PLEADING IS  
CUT SHORT... A HORRIBLE  
SILENCE IS PUNCTUATED BY  
AN AWFUL GASP...



THEN AFTER A MOMENT, THE LITTLE  
MAD CLOWN LIFTS HIS FACE IN A  
LAUGHTER SO BLOOD-CURDLING  
THAT IT MAKES  
THE SPIRIT FREEZE  
IN HORROR.

THE SPIRIT LEAPS TO A  
NEARBY TELEPHONE.



HELLO, DOLAN? THIS  
IS THE SPIRIT! IF YOU  
COME DOWN TO THE  
CIRCUS, YOU'LL FIND  
THE KILLER YOU'VE  
BEEN LOOKING  
FOR!



AND NOW YOU'D  
BETTER TELL ME  
THE WHOLE  
STORY!

MEANWHILE, COMMISSIONER DOLAN ARRIVES WITH  
A SQUAD OF POLICE.

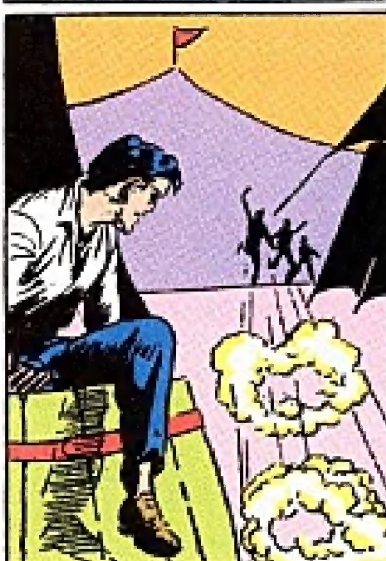


SURROUND THE  
PLACE! NO! LOOK,  
THERE GOES THE  
SPIRIT! NAB  
HIM!

WITH THE ENTIRE SQUAD AT  
HIS HEELS, THE SPIRIT  
ROUNDS A CORNER.



A MOMENT LATER...



I KILLED  
HER! HA-  
HA-  
HA!

WAIT,  
DOLAN!

YOU'LL  
GET  
THE  
CHAIR  
FOR THIS!



WHERE ARE  
MY MEN?

OFF ON A LITTLE  
SPRINT. SHE  
IS THE REAL  
KILLER! SHE  
WAS THE RING-  
MASTER, AND THE  
CLOWN BUT A FREAK  
OF HER DESIGN IN A  
CIRCUS OF MURDER!

...AND AS ANOTHER  
PEAL OF MAD  
LAUGHTER SHAKES  
THE CLOWN, THE  
SPIRIT VANISHES  
INTO THE MIST...

